

BOOK REVIEWS

Noteworthy: New and Not-So-New

So many books, so little time! Research interests within our field are often so specific that worthy works languish on our review shelf waiting for their human soul mates. So while these books and journals may not all be new, all are noteworthy.

The *Atlas der schweizerischen Volkskunde* (*Swiss Folklore Atlas*), published by the Swiss Folklore Society, is a particularly impressive resource. Over fifty years in the making, most of the material for the atlas was undertaken between 1937-42 by resident defense personnel trained in fieldwork. Numbered sections of this work have been appearing since 1950, and the 1989 release marks the completion of the atlas' coverage of folk custom. Over the years, original authors Paul Geiger and Richard Weiss bequeathed this work to other scholars who carried on the task after 1962. The work itself follows the style of dialect or artifact maps, documenting responses to 150 questions on local culture (for example, greetings, tools, customary laws, division of labor, verbal art) in 414 regions of Switzerland. Responses are translated into symbols on 292 maps, cross-referenced, annotated (in German), and bound to order. The *Swiss Folklore Atlas* is an exciting reference work which will certainly inform nearly all future swiss folklore studies, whether as foundation, inspiration, or historical background. The entire 17-part collection (over 2,000 pages, plus maps) costs 1,090 swiss francs. Parts are also available separately, at prices ranging from S Fr. 48 (for most of them) to S Fr. 190 (for the 1989 release). It is available through W&H Verlags AG, Zimmelfhofweg 7, 6314 Unterägeri (telephone 042/72 1026); or through G. Krebs AG, St. Alban-Vorstadt 56, 4006 Basel (telephone 061/23 97 23).

Roy Underhill's *The Woodwright's Eclectic Workshop* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991. pp. 238, forward, index. \$24.95 cloth, \$15.95 paper) is a real sleeper as a scholarly reference. The chatty,

readable text is a great introduction to traditional material culture of the Williamsburg area; one that can probably be enjoyed equally by undergraduates and their instructors. Because Underhill worked in close cooperation with the folks at Colonial Williamsburg (especially the department of historic trades), and describes their programming frequently throughout the book, it is also helpful for those interested in historic reconstruction or hands-on renovation. *The Woodwright's Eclectic Workshop* is not a project book (though experienced woodwrights may be able to work from the diagrams provided) but a potentially valuable reference work, which may be all the excuse you need to buy it for its most important feature—fun.

Selected Plays of Douglas Hyde (Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1991. pp. 192, selected checklist of Hyde's works. \$39.95 cloth, \$11.95 paper) is an interesting read, with alternate pages in Gaelic and the original Lady Gregory translations into English. Editors Gareth W. and Janet Egleson Dunleavy introduce the plays with a short biographical sketch of Hyde and an introduction to the turn-of-the-century Gaelic Revival and its principal players, especially Gregory and Yeats. The brief introduction and Hyde's plays help to place the Irish folklore movement into the context of its broader cultural and political programs. Several of the plays are based on Irish folk narrative; others on the Gaelic revival movement itself. Gregory's literal translations, produced for "beginners in Irish who want to follow the original" (26) are sometimes awkward, sometimes endearing to the casual reader in English, though they should serve their original function as well as ever. To further help the Gaelic student, the Dunleavys have included a chart of standard Irish pronunciation, as well as advise on using the (now extinct) dialect which appears in Hyde's texts.

Another work which includes both English and the original language, *The Philippines in Song and Ballad* (Manila: Cacho Herrmanos, Inc. 1976) is a collection of peasant songs collected in seven Philippine language groups. Felixberto C. Sta. Maria's introductions (to Philippine culture and history, song genres, and the individual songs) are brief but stimulating and helpful. The songs themselves are conscientiously translated for mood and accuracy (so I am told) and well chosen to reflect the lifestyle and concerns, humor and aesthetics of Philippine village life.

From David & Charles Publishers, Audrey James's *Memoirs of a Fen Tiger* (1989. pp. 136, index, photographs. \$11.95 paper.) is the oral history of a "Fen tiger," a man from the "Fenland" district of England. The work spans a period of time from his birth in 1906 to the winter of 1947, though the "conclusion" briefly mentions an "Anglia television" documentary of his life, and his subsequent career as an exemplary "Fenman." (132) Collected

and edited by his daughter-in-law, these stories offer nearly all that one could want from an oral history. The book's single serious flaw is a lack of commentary of any kind. While not all readers will be confused about what country is being discussed (as was I), most would prefer some formal cultural and geographical introduction. (Local references—especially to Norfolk—sent me scurrying for a map of Virginia). Folklore scholars will also want to know how collection and editing choices were made, and to read more about the Fen tiger's new-found career. With these additions, future releases of this book would be of much greater use to the professional folklorist.

We have also received copies of four journals, together representing the diversity of interests within folklore studies. Our in-house Africanist voiced a rave review for the new journal *Africa Forum Quarterly* (Africa Leadership Forum, P.O. Box 1374, London SW9 8ET, United Kingdom. \$75 per annum for four issues). The inaugural issue's editorial describes the journal's goals as a forum for discussion of leadership and development in Africa. Though it will be editorial policy to consider the African people themselves as the power and justification for both leadership and development, the journal will not dictate opinion about what form this should take. Rather, publisher Olusegun Obasanjo believes that a diversity of African opinions and perspectives is a better reflection of the "total picture of Africa" than any simplification of issues. As he points out, it is important for both Africans and non-Africans to know an Africa defined at last by her own people. Contributors from an impressive array of national and international political and academic institutions share their perspectives on most recent debates on democratic models and democratization, literary "Negritude, cultural conservation, women's status, disaster relief and other issues. Since at least some of these issues affect the lives and culture of even the remotest African, they should also affect the reading of every Africanist. This may be a journal to request from your institution.

The essays in *Science Fiction Studies* (vol. 19, number 1, published 3 times yearly by SF-TH Inc. at DePauw University. \$14 per annum, \$21 for institutions for USA subscribers) were primarily literary, but these included several social analyses through literary trends (of recent feminism, Rumanian sci-fi fans 1960-1980, future shock, and utopian studies). For those interested in sci-fi or utopian literature, this journal may be worth keeping an eye on. For subscription information contact Arthur Evans, East College, DePauw University, Greencastle IN 46135-0037.

Finally, two folk music journals which complement each other nicely: *Sing Out! The Folk Song Magazine*, and *The Old-Time Herald: A Magazine Dedicated to Old-Time Music*. Though *Sing Out!* includes "traditional," "ethnic," and "world" musics, it is very much a product of the folk music

revival. Pete Seeger and Michael Cooney write regular columns, and the many transcribed tunes consist mostly of relatively recent social commentary along with a few older pieces. The issue we have (vol. 35, number 2) also features a profile of Dave Bromberg and an article on organizing Folk Arts Network, as well as Ian Robb's worthwhile discussion of the concept of virtuosity in folk music. For many, the included complete list of newly released folk music records, tapes, CDs, videos, and song books will be worth the \$3.75 cover price. (\$15 per annum for four issues from: *Sing Out!*, P.O. Box 5253, Bethlehem PA 18015-5253). Record reviews seem both frank and useful and the list of camps and festivals is inspiring. As the name implies, *The Old-Time Herald* (\$4.50 per issue; \$15 per annum for four issues from: Old-Time Music Group, Inc., 1812 House Avenue, Durham, NC 27707) focusses on traditional regional music of the United States, including ethnic musics. Probably because of this sharper focus, this journal features fewer transcriptions and the list of events is shorter, though it still made me want to load up the car. Reviews were thoughtful and descriptive, and articles included advice on how to organize open jam sessions, how to package oneself as a professional musician, and how to play for a dance (volume 3, number 1, Fall 1991). But *The Old-Time Herald's* best features are its profiles of traditional musicians. More than most music magazines' features of artists, the Herald describes these musicians in the context of their lives and cultures: Poole pan-handled his way around the country, Ortiz discusses music with local children, Bailey faced segregation with a bone-dry wit, and I appreciate the chance to get to know each of them as people as well as learning about how their careers were shaped.

We have other books languishing, and more arriving all the time. If you are interested in reviewing books, films, or other media for *Folklore Forum*, send along a list of topics you are ready to review, and any questions, comments, or ideas. (We will gladly consider unsolicited reviews, but you would do better to inquire first). Your review represents a service to the journal, the author, the discipline, and yourself.

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